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# Word Pairs in Middle English Mystic Prose of the Fourteenth Century

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The religious instruction of the common people had to remain in a language they could all understand. Those in the business of saving souls were forced to address the flocks in the vernacular. This reason is that the fourteenth-century mystics wrote in English. It is worth exploring word pairs from the perspective of stylistic devices both for teaching the clergy and for persuading the laity. On the basis of evidence gathered from fourteenth-century mystic writers, - Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe, - I examined the use of word pairs in terms of frequency, parts of speech, semantic relationship, and etymology. These surveys have shown that the usage differs among these mystics. Subsequently, I discuss the context and effect of word pairs in the two prose works by Julian of Norwich, by relying extensively on the on-line version of *the Corpus of Middle English Verse and Prose*. Since some influential contemporary writers have also used the same pairs, I hypothesize that some of these pairs can be regarded as clichés of the age. Finally, I discuss the stylistic effect of word pairs. My conclusion is that word pairs reflect each writer's style and the theme of the plot. The mystics of the fourteenth century convey theological and philosophical complexities such as revelations and the grace of God with clarity and emphasis by means of word pairs.

## I . Introduction

Word pairs are stylistic devices which combine related words using *and*, for example, *war and peace*, *touch and go*, and *up and down*. This usage has been passed down from the Old English (OE) period to later generations. One reason for connecting two words is metre. Note an example in *Gregorius*. Fumio Kuriyagawa, (1981: 771-773) points out

a case in which the original Latin accusative singular word *dolorem* which means “grief”, is translated into synonymous OE word pairs as *sar and sorge*. Another Latinate instance is *pater* which means “priest”. The word is translated into the word pair *fæder and lareow*, the former word means “father” and the latter, “teacher”. The use of both alliterative and non-alliterative pairs is also common in Middle English (ME). In present-day English,

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since word pairs appear in many fixed expressions, it is reasonable to say that this tradition has been inherited from English prose. Above all, there are quite a few repetitive word pairs in the prose of four fourteenth - century mystic writers, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe. It is worth noting that these mystic writers were contemporaries of the first great English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. There seems to be a close connection between the appearance of such mystic writings and the increasing importance of the vernacular. The most essential requirement to support this argument is evidence based on ample factual data. I will compare the use of word pairs in the works of the above mentioned four mystic prose writers. Finally, I shall discuss the stylistic effect of the use of these pairs in Julian's *A Revelations of Love*, which is the earliest known prose work in English by a woman.

Before we discuss the mystic prose, it will be useful to look into the use of word pairs during the Middle English period.

Jespersen (1905 :§98) calls the usage “double expressions” and describes as follows:

- (1) A greater assistance may perhaps have been derived from a habit which may have been common in conversational speech, and which was at any rate are not uncommon in writing, that of using a French word side by side with its native synonym, the latter serving more or less openly as an interpretation of the former for the benefit of those who were not yet

familiar with the more refined expression.

Tani (2008: 96) discusses the effect of these pairs by focusing on instances in prose by Geoffrey Chaucer. He states that Chaucer uses word pairs in order to make the meaning clear to readers. Tani (2008: 104) adds that Chaucer tried not only to heighten or strengthen his stylistic effect by pairing Old French etymological words, but also to explicitly convey meaning, keeping well-versed French readers in mind. Further, Tani concludes that the prose genre influences the use of word pairs.

Kikuchi (1995) looks into the distribution of all the repetitive word pairs and phrases in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (c.1200) and asserts that the poet makes good use of repetitive word pairs on a highly selective basis. These word pairs and phrases allow the poet to add an informal touch and a colloquial tone and to suggest the cadences of legal speech. He argues that similar rhythm patterns produced by the repetition of almost identical structures are very convenient in oral literature.

According to Tani (2003) , who is concerned with the main motive behind the use of word pairs in the ‘Wooing Group’ in Early Middle English, the phraseological characteristics of the pairs are an emphasis on moral ideas pertaining to the virtues of Jesus, his passion, and the horrors of this world.

Shimogasa(2001) clarifies the usage of word pairs in the verse romance *Amis and Amiloun* (c1330) and concludes that the writer's motive

for using such pairs might be to help common people obtain a better understanding of the flow of the narrative by using conventional and stereotyped words. He turns our attention to the fact that a greater part of the word pairs used in this work are of Anglo-Saxon origin.

According to Miwa and Li(2003), Caxton's repetitive synonymous word pairs contributed significantly to the development of English through the establishment of a refined style which later authors have since made full use to produce easy but flowery style.

With regard to research on the use of word pairs in the works of Julian and Kempe goes, Aoki (2007) is an important study for indicating the stylistic effect of those pairs. My aim in this paper is to examine the narrative context and relation among the writers of devotional prose from an etymological perspective, an aspect that has not yet been investigated sufficiently. Owing to constraints of space, I will not take up paired words formed with *or*, and those that consist of more than three words.

## II. Frequency, parts of speech, meaning and etymology in the fourteenth century mystic prose

Table 1 involves nouns modified by

prepositional phrase like *the grace of God and teachyng of Holy Church*. I treat it as a word pair, *grace and teaching* in that case. Although it may be arguable whether these kinds of pairs are word pairs or not in rigid definition, these usages are not rare, and occur in significant narrative context. So it is not appropriate to overlook them here. This is the reason why the number of occurrence are more numerous than the paper by Koskenniemi(1975) who investigates *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

### II.1 The works and their pages to be examined, number of words, and rate of occurrences (%).

Richard Rolle (*English Writings of Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole*, pp.61-119, English epistles: *Ego Dormio*, *The Commandment*, *The Form of Living*)

Walter Hilton (*The Scale of Perfection*, pp.31-58 Chapters 1-25, 253 instances / 10280 words 2.46%)

Julian of Norwich ST (Short Text, *Revelations of Divine Love*, whole pp.39-79)

Julian of Norwich LT (Long Text, *A Revelation of Love*, whole pp.1-136, Chapters 1-17 pp.1-11, 270 instances / 10460 words 2.58%)

Table 1 A part of speech and frequency of word pairs (%)

	Rolle	Hilton	Julian ST	Julian LT	Kempe
N and N	137(64.3%)	139(58.4%)	63(52.1%)	373(57.9%)	74(48.7%)
V and V	31(14.5%)	55(23.1%)	15(12.4%)	106(16.5%)	45(29.6%)
Adj and Adj	34(16.0%)	36(15.1%)	23(19.0%)	103(16.0%)	23(15.1%)
Adv and Adv	8(3.8%)	8(3.4%)	20(16.5%)	62(9.6%)	10(6.6%)
Prep and Prep	3(1.4%)				
Total(100%)	213	238	191	644	152

Margery Kempe (*The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp.1-27 Chapters 1-12, 166 instances / 9799words 1.69 %)

As might be expected from current English, N and N pairs are predominant in all the texts examined. In Table 1, I enumerate N and N word pairs used more than once in each text below. Since the whole pages were surveyed in Julian's ST and LT, pairs occurred more than thrice are pointed out. The bold-faced letters show the word pairs appeared more than once not only in one text but also in other four prose.

#### Rolle

N and N: **day and nyght** / lust and liking / aungels and halowes / bodi and sawle / **mete and drynk** / ete and drynk / **men and women** / joy and comforth / lufe and loving / joy and sweetenes / **body and saule**

V and V: waxand and wanande

Adj and Adj: vayne and ill

Adv and Adv: mare and mare

#### Hilton

N and N: resoun and wille / **men and women** / **nyght and day** / / **bodi and soule** / bodili and goostli / loves and dredes / mekenesse and charit / love and charit / God and soule / wille and desire / wettis and feelynge / knowynge and love / knowynge and feelynge / **mete and drynke**

V and V: **answere and seie**

#### Julian

##### ST

N and N: ioy and blysse

V and V: **answered and sayde**

Adj and Adj: gladde and mery

##### LT

N and N: ioy and blisse / mercy and grace / ioy and liking / worship and ioy / worship and bliss / vertue and grace / will and worship / pite and love / love and grace / understandyng and knowing / (in) hevyn and (in) erth / wele and wo / ruth and pite / good and wisdom

V and V: saw and understode / behold and see / see(saw) and feel(felt) / sen and known / wetyn and knowen / groundid and rotid / thanking and prayseing / knowen and lovid / tremelyn and quakyn

Adj and Adj: herd and grevous / glad and mery / wide and syde / low and simple / meke and myld / kind and grace / swete and delectable

Adv and Adv: gostly and bodily / mekely and mytyly / merily and gladly

#### Kempe

Noun and Noun: solas and comfort / mercy and forgefnes / felyngys and revelacyons / **day and nygth / mete and drynke**

V and V: **answeryd and seyd** / etyn and drynkyn

Most of the word pairs found more than twice contain religious meaning, irrespective of their parts of speech. This leads us to speculate that word pairs should have a close connection with main theme of the work.

Another point to notice is the gradual increase

of Adv and Adv pairs, which are not so common in early ME prose. Let me refer to some preceding research here. Tani (2003) demonstrates there is no instance of Adv and Adv pairs in the prose of the year around “The Wooing Group” at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Shimogasa(2001) also mentions a scarcity of Adv and Adv pairs in *Amis and Amiloun* which is written around the year 1300. On the basis of these data, it must be possible to state that Julian’s usage of the Adv and Adv pairs is one of her stylistic characteristics leading to Modern English.

## II.2 Semantic relationship of the components

Koskenniemi(1975:213) classifies the word pairs into three main types as regards the semantic relationship of their components:

- i. Synonymous or nearly-synonymous
- ii. Metonymic, associated by contiguity of meaning
- iii. Complementary or antonymous

Table 2 is based on this classification to show the semantic relationship of the components numerically.

The following serves as examples of each semantic relationship.

- i. Synonymous or nearly-synonymous
  - (2) Jhesu, **my dere and my drewry**, delyte ert þou to my syng.  
Jhesu, **my myrth and melody**, when will þou com, my keyng?  
Jhesu, my hele and my hony, **my whart and my comfortyng**, (Ego Dormio: 71) (pleas for Jesus)
  - (3),but be ye fulfilled of the Holi Goost, seiande to youresilf in ympnes and psalmes and goostli songes, **syngynge and phalmynge** in youre hertes to oure Lorde. (Ladder vii:37) (to sing hymn)
  - (4) alle the peynes of cryste as halye kyrke **schewys & techys**, (ST i:39) (teaching of Jesus)
  - (5) I was **in al peace and in reste** that there was nothing in erth that should a grevid me. (LT xv:23) (peace and plenty nurtured by faith in God)
  - (6) sche mygth a put hem away for the dred that sche had of **illusyons and deceytys** of hir gostly enmys. (Kempe xxiii:54) (untruth of spiritual enemy)
- ii. Metonymic, associated by contiguity of meaning
  - (7) ...; þen he gyves hymself till þaime in swetnes and delyte, in byrnyng of luf, and

Table 2 Semantic relationship of the components

	syn	met	comp or ant
Rolle	94(44.1%)	81(38.0%)	38(17.9%)
Hilton	92(38.7%)	106(44.5%)	40(16.8%)
ST	69(57.0%)	45(37.2%)	7(5.8%)
LT	362(56.2%)	212(32.9%)	70(10.9%)
Kempe	89(58.6%)	56(36.8%)	7(4.6%)

**in joy and melody**,... (The Form of Living: 90) (gladness of faith in God)

- (8)fro the inward desire of vertues and of goostli knowynge and the feelinge of God, for to sette the sight of **thin herte and thyn affeccioun**, (Ladder XI: 41) (a devout frame of mind)

- (9)God has made waterse plenteuouse in erthe **to our service and to owre bodylye eese**, (ST viii:50) (the grace of God)

- (10)Thus arn synnes forgiven be **mercy and grace** and our soule worshipfully receivid in ioye, (LT xl:55) (sublimity of God)

- (11),wherin thei may have gret solas and comfort to hem and undyrstondyn the **hy and unspecabyl** mercy of ower sovereyn Savyowr Cryst Jhesu, (Kempes I:1) (divine mercy)

### iii. Complementary or antonymous

- (12)...sa cruell an enemy,þat oftsythes both **in body and in saule** confowndes many man. (The Form of Living: 89) (enemy of the soul humiliates many people's body and soul)

- (13)thanne bihoveth thee for to be right bisy **nyght and day** with travaile **of bodi and of spirit**, (Ladder iii:33) (obligation to practice faith in God on a daily basis)

- (14)God wille that we take hede of his worde and that we be euer myghtty in sekernesse, **in wele and in waa**. (ST xxii:74) (importance to heed God at any time)

- (15)And the Godhede ruleth and gemeth

**hevyn and erth** (LT lxvii :109) (contrast between heaven and this world)

- (16)Sche went away al schamyd and confusyd in herself, seyng **hys stabylnes and hir owyn unstabylnes**. (Kempes iv:15) (contrast between pious believers and inadequacy of herself)

Table 2 shows the three writers except Hilton have similar inclination in the semantic relationship of components. We can say that Hilton employs contiguity of meaning to extend the meaning as well as avoiding monotonous synonymous words repetition. In his work, the ratio of meaning is contingent or one of the words in a pair comprehends or includes another one, such as “a good wey and a gret disposynge” or “goodness and merci of God”. This is tentative result, though. It is a matter of course that I should survey the whole work to arrive at the conclusion.

## II.3 Etymological Distribution of Word Pair Components

In the following table 3, each word pair has been counted once, and words of Greek origin which have come to English though Latin, have been classified under “Romance”. The table also shows the order and the ratio in which the etymologically different components appear.

It is remarkable to find that the large proportion of word pairs consisting of purely native or purely Romantic elements indicates that the device is not primarily used to interpret loan words by means of native

synonyms.

Romance + Romance pairs are somewhat more common in *Kempe* than other four prose. In my survey, the ratio is 20.4 %. The result coincides with Koskenniemi (1975:215) which picks up all her word pairs exhaustively. According with her, 19.8 % of the word pairs are Romance + Romance in origin. It is interesting to note that the sequence Romance + Anglo-Saxon is less than 20 % in all the prose. Thus, we can maintain all the mystics in this study predominantly use word pairs not for “clarification of meaning” and “interpretation of unfamiliar words”.

Shimogasa (2001:37) gives reference in his concluding remarks that in verse romance, *Amis and Amiloun*, a greater part of components in word pairs are of Anglo-Saxon origin. Contrary to this result, not a few words originated in Romance language are found in the devotional prose. We can read into influence from Latin on which medieval religious idea is based. Here we must make reference to Tani(2008:99). He states Chaucer’s usage of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Saxon word pairs remains 20 % or something in all the four prose in his research<sup>1</sup>.

Meanwhile, both components of word pairs originated from Old French reach around as much as 30%. This is notable for the contrast with the five devotional prose in my research. Their word pairs of Anglo-Saxon origins are between 45 and 55 %. This figure leads us to state that there is a clear difference between Chaucer and the four mystic writers in terms of word pairs.

Although the fruits of Julian’s divinely-guided meditations influenced *Kempe*<sup>2</sup>, there are several differences in vocabulary that demand attention. The proportion of native words in *Kempe* is higher than that in *A Revelation*. In *Kempe*, the ratio of words from Romance languages such as Old-French, Anglo-French, and Latin are higher than that in *A Revelation*. In addition to that Old Norse, which is so similar to OE that they seem to be two dialects of the same language, is used more often in *A Revelation*. An examination of some of these instances will clearly demonstrate that Julian uses familiar and emotional native vernacular mainly to create a deeper impact on the lay Christian rather than on the clergy and aristocracy. It is worth investigating whether

**Table 3 Etymological Distribution of Word Pair Components**

1st word + 2nd word	Rolle	Hilton	Julian ST	Julian LT	Kempe
Anglo-Saxon + Anglo-Saxon	117(54.9%)	112(47.1%)	62 (51.2%)	324(50.3%)	69(45.4%)
Romance + Romance	26(12.2%)	27(11.2%)	16 (13.2%)	68(10.5%)	31(20.4%)
Anglo-Saxon + Romance	29(13.6%)	51(21.2%)	17 (14.1%)	105(16.3%)	27(17.8%)
Romance + Anglo-Saxon	34(16%)	32(13.3%)	19 (15.7%)	82(12.7%)	20(13.1%)
Romance + Old Norse	3(1.4%)	4(1.7%)	1 (0.8%)	9(1.4%)	0(0%)
Old Norse + Old Norse	0(0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	1(0.1%)	0(0%)
Old Norse + Anglo-Saxon	0(0%)	4(1.7%)	0 (0%)	25(3.9%)	2(1.3%)
Old Norse + Romance	1(0.5%)	4(1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	9(1.4%)	1(0.7%)
Anglo-Saxon + Old Norse	3(1.4%)	4(1.7%)	4 (3.3%)	22(3.4%)	2(1.3%)



Julian employs Anglo-Saxon words to interpret the etymologically foreign words in pairs. Keeping this in mind, I shall focus on “Anglo-Saxon and Romance” pairs and examine the three new words borrowed from the Romance languages in around c.1300<sup>3</sup>: adjective (adverb) *comfortable* (*comfortably*), noun *voice*, and verb *restore*. Let us consider the following instances in (17abcd).

(17a) comfortable, comfortably

**goode and comfortabyll** (ST iv:43)

**comfortably and lively** (LT x:16)

(17b) voice

This I said, for reverence in my meneing with a mighty **voice**; and full gretly was astonyed for wonder (LT iv:6)

**withowten voice and withowten openynge of lyppes** (ST xxii:74)

**without voice and openyng of lippis** (LT xiii:20)

(17c) restore

there was none other helpe to **restore** man but throw him that made man. (LT x:16)

it shall be **restorid and browte ageyn** into him be the salvation (LT lxii:102)

(17d) his derworthy children **be born and forth browte** (LT lxiii:103)

In (17a) “comfotabyll” is put after Anglo-Saxon word “goode” as “goode and comfotabyll”, but in LT there is an opposite paring like “comfortably and lively” as well as the same order.

In the case of “voice”, as is shown in (17b) Julian used it independently, and at the same

pairs with interpretation or explanation appear like “withowten voice and withowten openynge of lyppes”.

The usage applies to the case of “restore” likewise as in (17cd).

From these evidence, we can see that Julian does not necessarily use a native word for interpreting a foreign word, but she mainly considers some stylistic effect. In the limited pages I have surveyed, this characteristic is found in the prose by Rolle and Hilton. We shall see the stylistic effect specifically in Section III.

### III. Context and Effect of Word Pairs: With Special Reference to Julian of Norwich

There are two different versions of *A Revelation*: the short text and long text. The short text was probably set down soon after 1373, when she was granted the visions at the age of around thirty. Julian wrote the long text as long as six times after rethinking for twenty years. Stone(1970:29) states:

(18) The work of Julian is strikingly intellectual. She is an analytical mystic, carefully examining her visions, her conclusions, and her questions about the conclusions.

Although Julian talks of herself in the first chapter as “a simple creature that cowed no letter,” she was recognized as one of the greatest speculative theologians at that time. We are going to argue how she has used word pairs to convey her mystical experience effectively. And then, we will compare them with the word

pairs in the *Corpus of Middle English Verse and Prose* which compiles 146 kinds of verse and prose consisting of approximately 18,000,000 words.

### III. Comparison of ST with LT: With Reference to Other Middle English Literature

The word pairs in ST amount to 121 instances and in LT 644 instances. 62 of them are observed in the both texts. Let us look at the case of Walter Hilton (? -1396), a contemporary of Julian and part of his lifetime corresponds with her. There are 15 instances which co-occur in his prose *The Scale of Perfection*, ST and LT.<sup>4</sup> The whole text of *The Scale of Perfection* is surveyed here by using electric text available at TEAMS MIDDLE ENGLISH TEXTS. The results are below:

heart and soul / see and know / highest and worthiest / joy and bliss / love and like / preach and (or) teach / preaching and teaching / mourn and sorrow / reason and discretion / bodily and (or) ghostly / merrily and(or) gladly / pity and compassion / rest and peace / virtue and grace / dread and love

Considering the pairs appearing in either ST or LT, it is predictable that the number of common pairs with Hilton is increasing. Therefore we can infer that *A Revelation* involves not a few existing pairs. Let us examine them in other ME literature to confirm the presumption. The following table shows the number of word pairs coming into being in *Corpus of Middle English Verse and Prose*.

**Table 4** Number of common word pairs in ST, LT, and *The Scale of Perfection*, which are also found in *Corpus of Middle English Verse and Prose*:

Word Pairs (total number of ST and LT)	Religious prose	Other than religious prose	Religious verse	Other than religious verse	Translation
heart & soul (2)	1			1	
see & know* (5)	3			1	1
highest & worthiest (1)		1			
joy & bliss (32)	7	3	11	11	
preach & (or) teach (1)	1				
preaching & teaching (1)	1				
mourn & sorrow (1)			1		
reason & discretion (2)				2	
bodily& (or) ghostly* (38)	21	1		13	3
pity& compassion* (7)	2	4			1
rest& peace* (48)	13	7	5	18	5
virtue & grace* (14)	10	3		1	
dread & love* (7)	3		2	1	1
Total	62	19	19	48	11
Grand Total	159				

Note 1: \* indicates that the pairs involve the words before and after “and” replaced.

Note 2: No instance is found “love and like”, “merrily and (or) gladly”.

In the total of 159 pairs, 81 (50.9%) of them appear in religious prose and verse. One may notice that we can see no small number of instances from Richard Rolle, precursor of Julian in mysticism.<sup>5</sup> Rolle has already used 8 kinds of them in his prose and amounts to 25 in number. Moreover, since there are some examples which had already appeared in Wycliffe prose and the Bible, Julian must have mastered some of the style and rhetoric in them as well as deepening the understanding of a revelation of God through deep reading by herself. In addition, 7 kinds of word pairs out of the 35 instances of Julian occur in *The Canterbury Tales*. As Chaucer is a contemporary of Julian, some of the usage might be regarded as cliché of the age.

#### IV. Stylistic Effect of Word Pairs

Now let us consider some instances in individual cases below:

Rolle

- (19) Alas! **my joy and my swetyng** es demed to hyng, Nayled was his handes, nayled was hys fete, And thyrled was hys syde, **so semlely and so swete**. (Ego Dormio: 67)

Dear calling to the crucified Jesus Chris. Jesus is addressed with endearment “my joy and my swetyng.” Moreover, his body pierced his side on the cross is expressed with emotion by “so semlely and so swete”.

Hilton

- (20) Neverthelees, yif they that han this knowynge kepe hem in **mekenesse and**

**charit** · sich as thei han, and fleen **worldli and fleischly** synnes up her myght, it is to hem a good wey and a gret disposynge to veri contemplacion yif thei **desiren and prayen** devouteli after the grace of the Hooli Goost. (Ladder iv:34)

The quotation (20) is translated as follows:

“When they take the teachings of Saint Paul in **meekness and charity**, they will flee from **worldly and fleshly** sin. It is a good way and a great disposition to the true contemplation if they **desire and pray** devoutly after the grace of Holy God”.

As is shown in this citation, word pairs appear in parts closely related to the subject matter, such as “obedience to God”, “worldly crime” and “significance of a prayer”.

Likewise, word pairs in *A Revelation* reflected the subject of the prose. We can see quite a few pairs highlighting “the grace of God” and “a respectful manner toward God”.

We see sacredness of God in the instances below:

- Strength and discretion

- (21) And **as mygty and as wyse** as God is to save man, (LT xl:56)

- Mercy and grace

- (22), be **his mercye & his grace**, for he has made me thereto. (ST iv:44)

The citations below represent humble reverence to God:

- Sincere attitude to the teaching of God

- (23) Take now hede **faithfully and trostily** (LT xxxii:44)

(24)so may and so shulde ylke man do that  
sees it & heres it with **goode wille and  
trewe menyng**. (ST vi: 47)

There is an instance of triggering plot development. The experience of having a revelation is expressed vividly by chronological word pair “saw and felt” as seen in the following example.

(25)for I **saw and felt** that his mervelous  
and fulsome goodnes fulfillith al our  
mytys; (LT xliii:61)

In the following passage, antonymous pairs are employed to show the components inclusively:

- all the clergymen

(26)for himselfe is nerest and mekest, **heyest  
and lowest**, and doith all (LT lxxx:129)

- the teaching of church

(27)if I shall levyn here, for knowyng of **good  
and evill**, wherby I may be reason and  
grace the more depart hem on sundre, and  
**loven goodnes and haten evill** as holy  
church techyth.(LT l:71)

A series of complementary or antonymous pairs achieve effects in expressing the redemption dramatically.

Note (28):

(28)he bare for vs **in this lyfe and in his  
dying**, and alle the **paynes and passyons**  
of alle his creatures, **gastelye and  
bodelye**. (ST xiii:60)

Here let me show a noticeable instance of

Kempe:

(29)On a nygth, as this creatur lay in hir bedde  
wyth hir husbond, sche herd a sownd of  
melodye so **swet and delectable**, hir  
thowt, as sche had ben in paradyse. And  
therwyth sche styrt owt of hir bedde and  
seyd, “Alas, that evyr I dede synne, it is ful  
mery in Hevyn.” Thys melody was so swete  
that it passyd alle the melodye that evyr  
myght be herd in this world wythowtyn ony  
comparyson, and caused this creatur whan  
sche herd ony myrth or melodye afterward  
for to have ful **plentyuows and  
habundawnt** teerys of hy devocyon wyth  
greet **sobbyngys and syhyngys** aftyr the  
blysse of heven, not dredyng **the schamys  
and the spytys** of the wretchyd world.  
(Kempe iii:11)

“Melody” is a traditional accompaniment of mystical experience<sup>6</sup>. The sweet harmony is conveyed in word pairs. I must add that (29) is worth noting for this is the first scene Kempe is weeping. “Weep” is a pivotal word for showing her fit of passion. We are deeply impressed with her emotional uplift through “sobbyngys and syhyngys” and “plentyuows and habundawnt teerys”.

I have shown two kinds of word pairs. They are pairs betraying a lack of original thought, cliché as in Table 4 and original ones like (29) on the other. There is a close connection with a main theme of the critical plot in their choices of words.

## V. Conclusion

The stylistic aim of medieval mystics in using word pairs was to conjure up their own visions in the laity through language, and to consequently alter the mindsets and deeds of the lay Christian, thereby guiding him towards enlightenment. In order to achieve this purpose, various kinds of persuasive rhetoric devices need to be employed. In this respect, Julian must have known that a vernacular tongue achieves more effect rather than the high style of Latin. This increases the frequency of the usage of Anglo-Saxon + Anglo-Saxon word pairs in Julian's works as compared to that in Chaucer's prose, which was aimed at the aristocracy.

The functions of repetitive word pairs vary with literary genre and the writer's style. Furthermore, there are differences in usage between verse and prose. To rephrase my point, the word pairs in this study reflect each writer's individual style and the theme of the plot. We notice that English mystic writers are capable of conveying theological and philosophical complexities such as revelations, the grace of God and faith in Jesus with clarity and conviction by means of word pairs. We have already seen how the expressiveness of word pairs contributed to the immense popularity of Rolle and Hilton. Moreover, the ideas of Julian and Kempe are widely accepted by their audiences owing to the effective use of word pairs. With the exception of Julian of Norwich's ST and LT, the other works surveyed in this paper have not been dealt

with in detail. Therefore, my continuing task will be to undertake further exhaustive and systematic observations on the word pairs and other stylistic features for the purpose of religious direction and instruction to the layperson.

## Notes

An earlier version of this paper was read at the 19th The Japanese Association for Studies in the History of the English Language held at Kyoto University on March 28th, 2009.

- 1 The prose Tani has researched are *Tale of Melibee*, *The Parson's Tale*, *A Treatise of the Astrolabe* and *Boece*.
- 2 Meech and Allen (1940: 42-43) is referred by Stone (1970: 13) : Margery Kempe's Lynn and Julian's Norwich are both in Norfolk, not more than forty miles apart. Margery was born approximately at the time of Julian's "shewings" in 1373, and the two women met personally at least once for a period of "many days".
- 3 The year borrowed in English is based on Terasawa ed. (1985).
- 4 There are some spelling variants in ME. The modernized spelling is used here for reasons of convenience.
- 5 In this corpus, 19 items of Richard Rolle are included.
- 6 As common usage of melody in mystical prose, Windeatt (1985:303) refers to instances of Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*.

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